ERIC Document Resume	See Instruction Sheet	DATE OF RESUME	DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER	2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).	3. IDENTIFICATION NO.
ED002090	N.A.	N.A.

DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

4. AUTHOR(S): Stampp, Kenneth M. and others

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED: The Negro in American History Textbooks

6. PUBLICATION TITLE: Integrated Education

7. EDITOR(S): Weinberg, Meyer

8. PLACE OF ORIGIN: Integrated Education ORG. Associates ST. Chicago, Illinois CITY, STATE TELE. EXT. INST/LOC CODE

9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE: Integrated Education Associates Chicago, Illinois

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.
II	9-26	10/64	18

MICROFILM COPY AVAILABLE YES ☒ NO ☐

COPYRIGHT GRANTED YES ☒ NO ☐

COPYRIGHT RELEASE FILED YES ☒ NO ☐

TYPE OF REPORT
PROPOSAL ☐
IN-PROGRESS ☐
FINAL ☒
FOLLOW-UP ☐

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

ERIC SATELLITE CODE

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA

15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR: Book Reviews

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)

American history	curriculum changes	historical aspects		
Negro history	book reviews	historical distortions		
history textbooks	discriminatory attitudes			
	civil rights			

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In the midst of this civil rights revolution, historians and educators have a clear responsibility to see to it that the role of Negroes in American life is taught fully and accurately. Historical distortions help perpetuate and intensify patterns of racial discrimination. This applies not only to inaccurate history, but also to the kind of history that reinforces notions among whites of their superiority and among Negroes of their inferiority. The greatest defect in textbooks is the virtual omission of the Negro. All the texts play down or ignore the long history of violence between Negroes and whites, suggesting that racial contacts have been distinguished by a progressive harmony. The tone of a textbook is almost as important as anything it actually states. A minimally full and accurate textbook account should include the modern civil rights revolution which seems to be one of the major historical events of the mid-twentieth century. Attached are critical reviews of the two State-adopted textbooks used in grade five, three State-adopted texts used in grade eight, and two high school textbooks which are reported to be most widely used in California.

ERIC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	20. DIVISION OR DEPT.	21. CONTRACT NO. / PROJECT NO.
	22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	
	23. DURATION OF PROJECT	U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of Education

1

ED002090

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A TALK TO SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

James E. Allen, Jr.

Taken from an address by the New York State Commissioner of Education at the Regents Institute for New School Board Members, Albany, New York, August 15, 1964.

It is important to bear in mind that there are two aspects of the civil rights problem as it applies to our schools: *desegregation*, which is basically an administrative problem—and *integration*, which is an educational problem. Segregation can be eliminated whenever we as people decide to do it. Integration, on the other hand, will take time because it involves a change in attitudes, the unlearning of prejudices, the development of appreciation of and respect for individual worth and dignity.

Desegregation and integration are only words representing broad, sweeping ideas and ideals. It will be up to the teachers of our schools, with the help of administrators and school board members, to give these words substance—to deal with the translation of these words into reality in the day by day activities of the school.

THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

Kenneth M. Stampp,
Winthrop D. Jordan,
Lawrence W. Levine,
Robert L. Middlekauff,
Charles G. Sellers, and
George W. Stocking, Jr.

A report prepared by a panel of six historians at the request of the Education Committee of the Berkeley chapter of CORE. On March 12, 1964, this report was unanimously accepted by the California State Board of Education.

The undersigned, American historians and members of the History Department of the University of California, Berkeley, have been asked to review the American history textbooks that are most widely used in California from the standpoint of their treatment of Negroes. Attached are individual reports on the two state-adopted textbooks used in grade five, the three state-adopted textbooks used in grade eight, and the two high school textbooks reported to be most widely used in the state. These reports disclose an unhealthy condition in California education.

We are concerned first of all as *historians* that the history taught in our schools should accurately reflect the best findings of current scholarship. Professional scholars are aware that historical "truth" is an elusive quality. Well into the twentieth century professional scholars themselves were affected by the emotional aftermath of the Civil War, and there was a "northern" and a "southern" interpretation of such sensitive matters as slavery and Reconstruction. In the late nineteenth-century mood of national reconciliation, based on a widespread assumption of racial superiority among whites in both North and South, the "southern" view tended to prevail; and the deference of textbook publishers to the special sensitivities of the southern market has caused it to continue by and large to prevail in textbooks until this day. Meanwhile several generations of scholars, freer of sectional emotions and racist assumptions, through their researches and writings developed a substantially different understanding of many of these matters. Most of the textbooks we have examined reflect views on racial and sectional themes that have been rejected or drastically modified by the best of current historical scholarship.

We are additionally concerned as *citizens* because these historical distortions help perpetuate and intensify the pattern of racial discrimination which is one of our society's most serious problems. We are concerned not only because much of the material in these books is bad history, but additionally because it is a kind of bad history that reinforces notions among whites of their superiority and

among Negroes of their inferiority. Admittedly there is a danger in assessing historical writing in terms of its social consequences. A laudable desire to combat racism, and especially to bolster self-respect among Negro students, might result in exaggerating Negro contributions and the heroic qualities of Negro figures. In our view this would be an equal distortion of historical truth, and in the long run fail to have the desired social effects.

We do feel, however, that the seriousness of the problem of racism underscores the textbook author's responsibility to portray the Negro's role in American life fully, accurately and without either sentimentality or condescension. There should be a conscious effort to portray outstanding Negro figures selected by the same criterion of historical significance applied to non-Negro figures. Even those textbooks that now make some effort in this direction tend to single out men like Booker T. Washington and the minor scientist George Washington Carver, whose attitudes about race relations are least disturbing to conservative whites. Equally or more worthy of inclusion by the standard of historical relevance are men like Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. DuBois, and the Rev. Martin Luther King.

Always and everywhere our children should be told the truth, and the whole truth, as near as the best current scholarship can bring us to this elusive quality. This means, among other things, not obscuring the harsher aspects of the truth—the fact that Negroes entered American society as slaves, the brutalities of slavery, the racism of the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era, and the continuing depth and harshness of the problem of segregation and discrimination.

In the light of these general principles, the greatest defect in the textbooks we have examined is the virtual omission of the Negro. As several of the individual reporters point out, the Negro does not "exist" in the books. The authors of the books must know that there are Negroes in America, and have been since 1619, but they evidently do not care to mention them too frequently. In one book there is no account of slavery in the colonial period; in a second, there is not a single word about Negroes after the Civil War; in a third (composed of documents and substantive chapters), the narrative does not mention Negroes in any connection.

> Negroes have received special treatment all of their lives. They have received special treatment for 350 years. All we are asking . . . is some special treatment now to overcome the effects of the long special treatment of a separate sort that we have had in the past.
>
> —James Farmer, June 26, 1964

As Ralph Ellison's novel, *Invisible Man*, demonstrates, whites frequently do not "see" Negroes. But Negroes are Americans, their history is part of American history. They need to be "seen" in textbooks. The space given Negro history will, of course, depend in part on the nature of the textbook, and minimum standards of coverage are proposed later in this report. What is especially important is that the discussions of Negroes appear as an integral part of the book. Perfunctory or casual treatment may imply that Negroes are not part of America.

Important aspects of Negro experience, of course, depart from that of many other groups in America. Negroes were not just another immigrant group: no other group could be so readily identified by its color, no other group was so systematically enslaved, and no other group has been subjected to as persistent and virulent discrimination. From the Seventeenth century to our own day, Negro life has been filled with violence.

These facts highlight another failing of these textbooks that is almost as distressing as the invisibility of Negroes in them. All the texts play down or ignore the long history of violence between Negroes and whites, suggesting in different ways that

slavery was banned from the Old Northwest, and the Constitutional Convention opened the way for abolition of the slave trade after 1808. Even in the upper South, where the tobacco economy was languishing, liberal leaders hoped that the general operation of economic forces would eventually permit the abolition of slavery. Instead the developing cotton market revived plantation agriculture. Slaves proved so productive in southern cotton fields that slaveowners shut their ears to any criticism of the institution until the Civil War brought its demise.

Meanwhile antislavery sentiment was growing in the North. Even here racist assumptions caused free Negroes to be segregated and discriminated against; but after 1830 a vocal abolition movement had increasing effect. The efforts of the abolitionists, who included a substantial body of northern free Negroes, deserve serious and sympathetic exposition in textbooks. They are often derided for their occasional extravagance and for their internal disagreements, yet the fact is that they performed an immense service in educating Americans to the moral evils of slavery.

Abolitionists are frequently blamed for the Civil War by people who also insist that slavery had nothing to do with the coming of the war, that indeed the South fought to preserve state rights. Most scholars today agree, however, that slavery, and especially the issue of extending slavery into the territories, was fundamental. Certainly a careful appraisal of the slavery issue in national politics should be included in any textbook covering this period.

When the Civil Was came, some 200,000 Negroes participated in the fighting that resulted in their formal emancipation. Following the war they also took an important part in the struggle over southern Reconstruction, which determined whether their emancipation was to be nominal or full. Reconstruction is a controversial issue in American history. The best scholarship today portrays sympathetically the radical Republicans in Congress, who opposed Lincoln's and later Johnson's plans for bring the southern states back into the Union as quickly and painlessly as possible under conservative white leadership. The radicals, this scholarship holds, operated from mixed motives; to be sure they were interested in maintaining their political advantage, but they also wished to reform the structure of southern life. They especially wanted to help the Negro make himself a full partner in a free society.

It is in treating the Reconstruction state governments in the South that the older scholarship is most distorted by racist assumptions and most pernicious in its present-day effects. Modern scholarship overwhelmingly rejects the myth of Reconstruction as a saturnalia of misgovernment and corruption by

> The struggle for civil rights is the pressing problem of our time; and until we are willing to come to grips with these new realities, to admit that much of our history has been based on the myth of equal opportunity, we are indeed playing a dangerous game.
>
> —Senator Kenneth Keating, April 1, 1964

ignorant and/or venal carpetbaggers, Negroes, and scalawags. Though the Reconstruction regimes had their quota of corruption, as did other American governmental units in this period, the student needs to know that the radical Republican experiment for a time made progress toward a healthy reconstruction of southern society, that many Negroes served ably in the Reconstruction governments, and that the Reconstruction governments had many constructive accomplishments, particularly the extension of the public school system, and the protection of equal civil and political rights of all.

The experiment in Reconstruction failed after a few years, owing to a growing northern indifference which permitted conservative southern whites to regain control by violence, through such agencies as the Ku Klux Klan. Soon Negroes had been reduced to a kind of unofficial slavery. The vote was taken from them, first by trickery and intimidation and later by amend-

ments to the state constitutions. Denied economic opportunity, many were exploited as share croppers, and others in menial jobs. By the end of the century they were born and reared in segregated communities, and lived and died in a state of inequality, isolated from the mainstream of American life. Southern state laws and a disastrous Supreme Court decision, Plessy v. Ferguson, helped encase them in segregation.

Segregation and violence continued to characterize race relations in the South during the first half of the twentieth century. The hundreds of lynchings which used to occur annually have almost disappeared, but bombings, burnings, and shootings have increased. A more important change has been the movement of millions of Negroes to the cities and to the North. Here repression has has been somewhat more subtle but only somewhat less damaging. Employers and unions relegate most Negroes to menial jobs. They are segregated into ghettoes, where they pay high rents for slum housing. Segregated housing means in turn segregated and inferior schools.

The other side of the story is the increasingly vigorous effort, especially by Negroes themselves, to change the situation. The growing Negro vote in crucial northern cities and the cold-war campaign to win the support of the uncommitted nations of the world has made the federal government more responsive to the plight of Negroes. Prodded by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the federal courts began to declare in the 1930's and 1940's against racial discrimination in voting, jury service, and educational opportunities. This movement culminated in the Brown decision of 1954 outlawing racial segregation in the public schools. Meanwhile the executive branch of the federal government had begun to move against segregation and discrimination in the armed forces and in civil service employment. Some state legislatures acted against discrimination in housing and employment, and Congress took its first cautious steps since Reconstruction to advance civil rights.

In the years since the Brown decision a civil-rights mass movement has taken shape among Negroes, utilizing the tactics of non-violent direct action to demand immediate and fully equality in all areas. The Reverend Martin Luther King led Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama, in a year-long boycott of the city's segregated bus system. Negro college students launched "sit-in's" throughout the South in a movement that ended segregation at lunch counters and other public facilities in hundreds of southern communities. "Freedom riders" gave effect to court descisions outlawing segregation in transportation facilities. By 1963 mass demonstrations for equality in public facilities, jobs, education, and housing had spread from the South to many northern cities and over 200,000 joined a "March on Washington" in support of President Kennedy's proposal that Congress pass a substantial civil-rights bill. These efforts were pursued in the face of mob violence, the arrests of thousands of demonstrators, the assassination of an NAACP leader in Mississippi, and the death of four Negro girls in the bombing of a Birmingham church.

This civil-rights revolution seems to us to be one of the major historical events of the mid-twentieth century and to demand full treatment in any American history textbook. The gains that have been made should be described realistically and not as an ode to the inevitable justice and progress of the democratic system. It should be made clear that the outcome of the civil rights struggle is still in doubt, and that the inequalities are so great as to defy quick remedy by even the most vigorous efforts.

In the midst of this civil-rights revolution, historians and educators have a clear responsibility, at the very least, to see to it that the role of Negroes in American life is taught fully and accurately. We have tried to indicate what a minimally full and accurate textbook account should be. Surely the state of California can no longer tolerate textbooks that fall far short of this minimal standard.

BOOK ONE

Miriam E. Mason and William H. Cartwright, *Trail Blazers of American History* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1961). A supplementary textbook for grade five.

This book is a series of biographical stories about twenty-five outstanding Americans, arranged topically-chronologically so as to provide a general account of American history. The authors have made a special effort to include minority groups, devoting one of their stories to George Washington Carver and making clear the moral basis of the opposition to slavery. Yet even this well intended effort leaves a great deal to be desired.

The basic problem is that Negroes are completely invisible except in the Carver story and in the section on the Civil War, where the existence of slavery could hardly be ignored. The unit on colonization had a story on John Smith and the founding of Virginia, which might well have discussed the introduction of slavery. But instead readers of this book get the impression that the settlers of colonial America were entirely from Europe. As far along as p. 91, in the introduction to the unit on the Revolution, the following language is used: "You have learned how it happened that Europeans came to live in America . . . At first the colonists thought of themselves as Englishmen, not Americans." This unit discusses Washington's boyhood on a plantation (he "lived on a large farm called a plantation," p. 116) and his later management of Mount Vernon without any reference to the presence of slaves.

In fact Negroes or slaves are not mentioned at all in the book until p. 187, where Lincoln encounters slavery on his trip to New Orleans. This is in a unit on the Civil War consisting of stories about Lincoln and Lee. This unit emphasizes that both Lincoln and Lee opposed slavery, implied that Southerners maintained the institution because they "depended upon slaves to do the work" on their cotton plantations, and even suggests the worst aspects of slavery by reporting that in New Orleans young Lincoln "saw Negroes chained together." This section continues (p. 187): "Abe was a kind-hearted young man. It made him feel sad to see the slaves. 'I do not believe in slavery,' he thought. 'It must be hard to be a slave, even if your owner is kind. It would be terrible not to be free.'" (The suggestion that owners were usually kind is made again when Lee is reported as saying to his wife (p. 202), "They are our slaves, and we take good care of them. But if anything should happen to me, I would like to have our slaves set free.")

Yet even the Civil War section suffers from the book's persistent dodging of conflict and controversy, its unflagging commitment to a thesis of harmonious progress. The unit on the Civil Was is introduced by the following statement (p. 183): "As our country grew, people in different parts of it came to have different ways of thinking about some of their problems. These differences led to quarrels and finally to another terrible war. This was called the War between the States. But when the war was over, men and women in all parts of the country worked together again to make America great and strong." (Cf. p. 192, "This war is now known as the War between the States or the Civil War.")

It should be no surprise then that the Negro drops completely from view with the Emancipation Proclamation, not to reappear at all except in the Carver story. Here again the ugly realities of race relations are completely obscured. It is explained several times that Carver had great difficulty finding a school he could go to, but there is no explanation of why he had difficulty. Tuskegee is described (p. 250) as "a college in Alabama especially for Negro students," with no further explanation. The only general statement about the conditions of life for Negroes is a statement imputed to Carver (p. 251): "Many people of my race are poor. They have little to eat." The only

statement suggesting a "race problem" is quoted from a citation in praise of Carver (p. 253): "'You have

> I ask Senators to name a State—any State—and I will declare that in that State there is a substantial body of public opinion opposed to delivering the Constitution to the Negroes of America.
>
> —Senator Wayne Morse, April 2, 1964

done much for the white people as well as for the Negroes,' he was told. 'You are a bridge between the two races.'"

While recognizing the authors' praiseworthy effort to include an outstanding Negro, I question whether Carver is the most appropriate figure to use. Carver deserves to be held up for emulation on account of his moral qualities, but the contention that his scientific work was distinguished or had any substantial effect on southern agriculture is by and large a sentimental myth. Moreover both his Tuskegee connection and the story line of his life are implicit arguments for Booker T. Washington's questionable philosophy of race salvation through humility and hard work.

The basic fault of this book, as of many others, is its effort to purvey a sweetness-and-light picture of American history that is both false and vicious in its effects. Children, both black and white, need to know that through the institution of slavery Negroes were a major element in American life from the very beginning. They need to know what slavery was like before the Civil War and what it has been like to live under the "new peculiar institution" of segregation and discrimination since the Civil War. They need to know that Negroes, despite the handicaps imposed upon them, produced leaders who fought for justice and quality. For the purposes of this book a figure like Frederick Douglass would have been much more representative of what has been best and most important in American Negro life.

Charles G. Sellers

BOOK TWO

Edna McGuire, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961). A basic textbook for grade five.

Since my comments will serve only as partial basis for a later integrated report it seemed appropriate to offer them in unintegrated topical form.

SLAVERY:

Despite the suggestion on p. 229 that slavery was "a way of life," it is in fact treated in narrow, sterile, and naively economic terms as a labor system pure and simple. Witness the definition on p. 161: "Such a system of securing workers through ownership is called *slavery*." The major account of its development (229-30) is couched in a similar framework: "A new country needs workers . . . [The English] met this need in two ways . . . [Although the first Negroes were bond servants], slavery later became common . . . . Slavery increased in the South, where it met a need for workers . . . [on] large plantations where only one crop was grown . . . . [The cotton gin increased the need for workers, which] brought an increase in slavery." The information offered as to its extent is at best misleading. The statement that it was "accepted in the South" is supplemented by the fact that many Southerners did not own slaves and that there were 18,000 free Negroes in New Orleans alone. Since this is the only numerical statement having to do with slavery in the whole book, one cannot help wondering if it was not intended to minimize the magnitude of the problem. As to the character of the slave system as "a way of life," we are given no more than incidental clues On p. 149 we are told that Negro women and children rode in wagons to Mississippi while the slave men walked; on p. 165, that Negro slaves sometimes ran away to Florida; on p. 230, that slaves "often ran away." But there is no inkling of the reasons why they might have run away, no mention of the slave trade, of the problems of discipline and order, no indication that Negro resistance to slavery ever took any other form than individual escape, no suggestion of the social or psychological meaning

of slavery either for the Negro or the Southern white beyond the idea that the difference in labor systems was at the root of sectional contlict.

ABOLITION, CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION:

One feels that this book treads a very narrow course between a dominant traditional concern for Southern prejudices and a dawning consciousness of the commercial significance of Negro-liberal sensitivities. If there is no attempt to justify slavery in other than economic terms, no repetition of the customary suggestion that Negroes worked better in the sun, neither is there any adequate indication of the moral implications of slavery. True, at one point it is suggested that "many people thought slavery was wrong" (p. 230), but we are giving no clue why. And far from indicating that opposition to slavery expressed the moral spirit of our modern democratic-industrial culture, the book suggests in effect that the Northern opponents of slavery were irresponsible trouble-makers whose views had no relation to the irresistible moral currents of their time: "Many people thought that slavery was right. But certain other people thought that slavery was wrong" (p. 220) "Some Northerners [by attacking it] . . . stirred up differences between the American people." (p. 230) Indeed, the only person who would seem to be permitted a legitimate and intense moral opposition to slavery is R. E. Lee, who, for reasons unknown, "hated slavery" and freed his own slaves. (p. 240).

A similar excessive concern for Southern feelings is evident in regard to the war which began in 1861: "It is called the War Between the States. It is often [but not in this book] called the Civil War." (p. 229) This of course exactly reverses the priorities of actual historical and even popular usage. The distortion is minor, but nonetheless indicative. As to the war itself, my main observation would be that there is no mention whatsoever of the considerable Negro participation in the Union armies.

The rather confusing one-page discussion of Reconstruction and after (p. 244) perpetuates a number of traditional anti-Radical views: the men "who wanted to punish the South" passed laws "neither wise nor generous" and "several years of confusion followed." There is no mention of Black Code or Ku Klux Klan. Both the public school system and the breakup of the plantation system are by implication incorrectly attributed to the Redeemers. The New South is created in a phrase, the post-Reconstruction fate of Negroes disposed of with the laconic suggestion that they "learned to take care of themselves."

THE NEGRO IN MODERN AMERICA:

Once slavery is disposed of on p. 244, the treatment of the Negro changes radically. He disappears completely as the focus of a moral or social problem. There is no mention of the Jim Crow system, of school segregation cases, or of the modern Negro movement for equality, through the book (published in 1961) carries right on up through Khrushchev to Castro. On the other hand, it is only after the Civil War and the abolition of slavery that Negroes emerge as distinguishable human individuals. Even so, only three Negroes are actually named in the whole book: Percy Julian and G. W. Carver, who receive brief biographies, and B. T. Washington, who is mentioned in the second of these as the founder of Tuskegee. But if Julian and Carver are "sympathetic" characters touched by the heroic aura surrounding all scientists in our society, their biographies are virtually devoid of specifically racial significance. And whether by chance or design, these two are juxtaposed in separation from the biographies of white scientists. (pp.298-300)

BEYOND THE TEXT ITSELF:

In this lavishly illustrated book, there is only one picture (of the Tuskegee laboratory on p. 30) which contains people who are obviously Negro. There is also on p. 345 a small picture entitled "Negroes permitted to vote by Constitutional amendment—1870" in which two of the white-skinned figures might be identified as Negro by their costume and slightly

Negroid characteristics. But beyond this, the Negro is invisible, even in the scene of life on a tobacco plantation. (p. 93) In the numerous exercises at the end of chapters and sections, I was able to find less than a handful of questions or activities which related to the Negro. On p. 165, "slavery" is one of a list of words to master—but one looks in vain for the words "segregation," "discrimination," or "integration," though they are no more difficult than many others in the book. Aside from a general "How did each event pictured help democracy grow?" under the aforementioned picture on p. 345, the only "question for thought" having to do remotely with the Negro is one on p. 245: "Why did slavery grow in the South and die out in the North?" In the context provided, this question can only help to reinforce a generally amoral approach to slavery and its consequences. In the sections "Making History Live," the only suggestion relating to the Negro is one on p. 279 that students learn some of the "beautiful songs called spirituals" which "the Negroes have given us" (consider the implications of the phrasing). Among the many books suggested for "good readers," there is not one whose title indicates any relation to the Negro, unless it be Carl Sandburg's *Abe Lincoln Grows Up*.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES:

When I read the unelaborated suggestion on p. 175 that "their neighbors objected to certain Mormon beliefs," it occured to me that much of the treatment of the Negro might be explained simply as product of a general desire to avoid *any* potential controversy. But in this text, at least, this is not the case. The section between pages 305 and 316, "Life in Modern America," is in effect a discussion of a series of social issues in industrial America. If the treatment is insipid, the issues are nevertheless posed in normative terms (e.g., immigrants lived in "crowded, dark houses" and were sometimes "forced to work for very low pay," p. 307). If most of the problems are now safely in the past of historical consensus, some of them are still matters of current debate: e.g., that of adequate schools for America's growing population. It certainly would have been possible to include in this chapter, perhaps under the section "Saving America's Human Wealth," some treatment of the problems of integration.

Other alternatives are suggested by the treatment of the American Indian. (see esp. pages 253-57) An attempt is made here to present the Indian in both cultural and moral terms. "To understand the Indians on the last frontier, you need to know something of early Indians"—and we are given a picture of the variety of Indian cultural forms. There is some suggestion of the history of volence and double-dealing which reduced the Indian to reservation life, and even a discussion of present social problems in this historical context: "Some Indian tribes have a difficult time today. They cannot make a living on their lands. Their people have not had the training or help to make it possible for them to earn the things they need." The justice of the Indian resistance to the white advance is explicitly posed as a "question for thought." Students are elsewhere urged to choose among individual Indian chiefs as subjects for library research and class reports. (p. 279) While the role of the Negro and Indian in American history and their positions in modern life are in many respects quite different, the utility of analogous approaches would seem obvious, both in more accurately portraying the Negro's historical role and in giving to both Negro and white children the sense of respect for self and fellow citizen which underlies the creation of a broader national identity.

George W. Stocking, Jr.

BOOK THREE

Harriet M. Brown and Joseph F. Guadagnolo, *America Is My Country: The Heritage of a Free People* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961). A supplementary textbook for grade eight.

About half of the book is devoted to teaching children how "We Americans Honor the Symbols of Our Democracy (the flag, the American eagle, the Statue of Liberty, etc.); which are "The Patriotic Landmarks and Monuments Every American Should Know" (Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Mount Vernon, etc.) which are the best-known "Patriotic Poems and Songs for Americans" ("Old Ironsides," "I Am an American," etc.); and which are "The Patriotic Holidays that Americans Celebrate."

The substantive chapters are the following:

1. What It Means to Be an American
3. Our Documents of Freedom
4. Uncle Sam's Government in Washington
5. Washington, Capital of Our Nation
7. Great Americans Express the Spirit of Our Nation
10. Good Americans Make Democracy Work

How the Negro fares in these six chapters is easily described: he doesn't exist—he is never mentioned. He doesn't appear in the index; and, although the book is profusely illustrated, he does not appear in any of the photographs. The explanation for this is not white chauvinism but timidity—the desire not to offend anyone. Since this book was published in 1955, it was still possible not to be too concerned about offending Negroes.

Actually, the book exudes a vague sort of good will toward all men. On page 3 there is this statement: "We Americans are different in a very important way from the people of most countries . . . . [Unlike other countries] we Americans do not come from one national stock. We are descended from people of many nationalities—English, Scotch, Irish, German, Scandanavian, Italian, Polish, Russian, and so on . . . . We believe that our country is stronger and richer and more vigorous becesau our people come from many lands." The omissions of Negroes, Asians, and Indians in this statement is an example of the timidity characteristic of this book.

On pages 7-8 is this statement about equality: "Under our Constitution and our laws all citizens have equal rights . . . . It makes no difference what a man does for a living, to what race or religion he belongs, or how much money he has—he is the equal of any other citizen in the eyes of the law . . . . We Americans believe that everyone should have an opportunity to get an education and a job, and the chance to make a decent life for himself and his family. We have done a great deal to make these things possible for all Americans. Although some of our people still do not enjoy equal opportunities, we are working toward our ideal of 'liberty and justice for all.'" Again, timidity accounts for the vagueness of this statement.

In Chapter III, which deals with "our documents of freedom," one statement (page 55) concerning "what we should know about our Constitution" declares: "We should know that no American can be refused the right to vote because of race, religion, or color." This, of course, is a vague and inaccurate reference to the Fifteenth Amendment. The following "documents of freedom" are completely ignored: Thirteenth Amendment; Fourteenth Amendment; Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation; the Supreme Court decision of 1954.

Chapter 7, "Great Americans Express the Spirit of Our Nation," is a medley of well-known quotations from Lincoln, Webster, Washington, Patrick Henry, etc. A portion of Lincoln's second inaugural address is included, with the passage referring to slavery omitted. Indeed, there is no question with any reference to slavery, to emancipation, or to the post-Civil War struggle for civil rights.

Chapter 10, "Good Americans Make Democracy Work," devotes more space to how to fight communism than to any other topic. One might expect at least a brief discussion of the problem of race relations in this chapter but the authors ignore the problem. On page 207 they make this astonishing statement: "Today al-

most all men and women over twenty-one have the right to vote, regardless of their race or their color or whether they are property owners." But elsewhere in this chapter there are additional vague statements which are good in themselves but are not related to anything specific. On page 208: "We believe that every person deserves respect as a human being, no matter who he is. We believe in fair play and in justice for all." On page 209: "Respect for the rights of others is part of our way of life in our democracy." On page 218: "We know that there is still room for improvement in our democratic way of life . . . . Citizens may . . . criticize our democracy because there are still Americans who are not given equal rights in the community where they live . . . . However, "we do not condemn the game of football because of the errors and fumbles a team makes."

At the very end of the book are two relatively bold statements, if still somewhat vague:

Page 220: "We are a land of many races and nationalities, and we are proud that this is so. This is the wonderful and different thing about America . . . There is no room in our way of life for racial prejudice. We are all Americans, living and working together in this great democracy of ours."

Page 222: Part of "A Pledge for Americans": "I will judge a person by what he is, not by his race or religion. I will not let prejudice affect my ideas of justice and fair play."

Kenneth M. Stampp

BOOK FOUR

Rebekah R. Liebman ad Gertrude A. Young, *The Growth of America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959). A supplementary textbook for grade eight.

COLONIAL PERIOD

The first mention of Negroes in this book with relation to their introduction "as slaves" in 1619. There is no mention of where they came from nor is the continent of Africa mentioned once in this book. At no time in the discussion of slavery is there any attempt to explain what slavery actually was or how it differed from other labor systems such as indentured servitude which receives several paragraphs. The reasons given for the introduction of slavery are wholly economic: No one person could do by himself all the work that was necessary for growing crops on such a large piece of land, so the southern planters had slaves to help him." (p. 78) There is no attempt to explain why slavery was wholly Negro slavery. This seems to be taken for granted. In the rather extended discussion of the colonial plantation economy there is no direct description of the life and condition of the slaves though there is a strong intimation that it was quite decent.

"The slaves did most of the work, but the plantation owner worked too. . . . He had to see that his family was well provided for and also that there was enough food and clothing for his slaves. Not many planters neglected their slaves, since each one represented a great deal of money. . . . The planter's wife . . : saw to it . . . that the health of her family and of the slaves was good." (pp. 78-79.)

The only comment that can even remotely be construed as a criticism of slavery is this stark one-sentence paragraph which appears in a discussion of colonial education: "For the slave population there was no education." (p. 86) There are no reasons given for this nor are the consequences of the lack of education pointed out. There is no further mention of slavery or the Negro during the colonial period or the Revolution or the early national period though in the section on Ante-Bellum America there is mention of the fact that the Northern states abolished slavery (no dates or reasons are given) and that such leaders as Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison,

> The northern man who once denounced the South on account of its maltreatment of the blacks gradually grows silent when a Negro is brought next door.
>
> —Carter G. Woodson, 1918

and Henry opposed slavery (again no reasons are given).

ANTE-BELLUM PERIOD

The treatment of slavery in the section dealing with the causes of the Civil War (which is quaintly titled "WE DECIDE TO SEPARATE and then to UNITE") is as vague as it was in the earlier parts of this text. Again there is absolutely no description of slavery as an institution or a way of life and the term "slave" itself is nowhere defined. All that is mentioned is that the South was convinced that slavery was absolutely necessary to the maintenance of their economy and a group of people in the North called abolitionists felt that slavery was an evil. But there is not even a hint of the reasons for the latter's antipathy to slavery. Indeed, if anything, the authors' treatment of slavery can be called favorable. In a sub-section entitled "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN CAUSES TROUBLE" they have this to say of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel:

"It told of the suffering of the slaves of the South and of the cruelty of the slave owners.

Actually *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was not a fair nor a truthful picture of the conditions of the slaves. Although some slaves may have been badly treated, for the most part, they were not.

Slaves represented a great deal of money to their owners, and their owners took care of them. There was also in many cases a close feeling between the slaves and their masters which the Abolitionists did not understand." (p. 288)

The treatment of the events leading up to the Civil War is generally brief and inadequate. The Dred Scott Decision for instance is described as follows:

"The Supreme Court of the United States decided two things: (1) that Dred Scott was still a slave, and (2) that a slave owner had a right to take his slaves to any part of the country where there were no laws against slavery." (p. 290)

The part of the decision which most upset the North—that Congress could take no action with relation to slavery in the territories—is completely ignored.

CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

The treatment of the Civil War (which in these pages is almost invariably called The War Between the States) focuses mainly upon military events though this novel and fanciful account of the origins of the Emancipation Proclamation is given:

"During the war the people of the South had been using their slaves to do many jobs which helped in the war effort. They cooked for the army, dug trenches, drove wagons. The leaders in the North said that something should be done to stop this use of slaves. Lincoln's answer was the Emancipation Proclamation." (pp. 307-309)

There is no mention of the participation of the Negro in the Northern war effort.

The brief treatment of Reconstruction is the standard anti-Radical Republican pro-Southern Democrat account. Again there is no attempt to describe the condition of the freedmen. The 13th and 14th Amendments are mentioned without comment and the 15th is described with an obvious lack of approval:

"The right to vote or to hold office was not given to the leaders of the Confederacy. However, the Negroes were given these rights, although few of the Negroes could read or write, and none had any experience in government." (pp. 318-319)

There is no description of the advances in civil rights under the Reconstruction governments though the corruption of the Carpetbaggers is vaguely described. There is also this totally amoral account of the K.K.K.: "The purpose of the Ku Klux Klan was to frighten the Negroes and the people who were in control of the Southern state legislatures. The organization lasted for a time; but as the Southern states became once more part of the Union, *there was no*

longer any reason for the existence of an organization such as the Ku Klux Klan." (pp. 319-320) (Italics mine) Why there was no longer any reason for the Klan and precisely what happened to the Negro after Reconstruction is not explained. Indeed, this is the last mention of the Negro in this text. Although the book was published in 1959 and mentions events as recent as the launching of American space satellites in 1958, there is not one word about the civil rights movement, the migration of Negroes to the North, the condition of Negroes in the 20th Century, or the Supreme Court's 1954 Brown decision. After Reconstruction the Negro, who was treated vaguely enough up till then, became wholly invisible.

The striking thing about this volume is the dehumanized way in which Negroes are treated. They are mentioned only in the institutional setting of slavery, and there inadequately, but never as human beings; their way of life, their problems, their gains, their struggles, are totally ignored. Not one Negro individual is named with the exception of Dred Scott. Words like "segregation" "desegregation" "integration" do not appear once anywhere in this account. In a book which has two or three illustrations on every page, there are only two illustrations depicting Negroes, both of them during slavery. It should be mentioned that the authors are not morally obtuse or unwilling to take a stand on every issue. Thus the criticize the manner in which the Mormons were treated and describe their hardships (p. 263); they describe the often inhuman conditions of early factories, the plight of the workers and justify the rise of labor unions (pp. 275-276); the American Indians are treated sympathetically and the treatment accorded them by the white settlers is criticized (p. 336); the immigrants are treated with a bit less sympathy but at least their plight is described (pp. 360-361). The authors' treatment of the Negro therefore is not typical of their treatment of a number of other groups which have been victims of intolerance. The Negro above all is singled out not only for unsympathetic and inadequate treatment but for non-treatment.

Lawrence W. Levine

BOOK FIVE

Mabel B. Casner, Ralph H. Gabriel, Edward L. Biller, and William H. Hartley, *Story of the American Nation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962). A basic textbook for grade eight.

While the treatment of Negroes in this eighth-grade American history textbook may be faulted at almost every turn, virtually all the myriad failings derive from four inter-related presuppositions.

The most pervasive and insidious (because least conscious) assumption is that Negroes are not Americans; they do not share in the *Story of the American Nation* because, evidently, they are not part of the "American people." This assumption colors every mention and non-mention of Negroes in the book. It is responsible for the failure to describe the African cultural background (though the civilizations of China and Japan are fulsomely portrayed, pp. 508-9) and for the absence of any discussion of Negro acculturation. (There were "Jewish people" and Roman Catholics, but "most people of the English colonies were Protestants," p. 87.) It is responsible for the implicit exclusion of Negroes from the "people of many countries"—the French, Scotch, Irish, Scotch-Irish and Germans are mentioned—who "move[d] to America's communities, seeking freedom and land "and who, living together, beg[a]n to create American ways of life," partly through "marriage between people of different nationalities" (pp. 92-4). Thus "the melting pot" is endorsed while the most important elemen in the process is ignored and, thereby implicitly disapprobated. Similarly, during Reconstruction "the people of the South found themselves opposing the governments of their own states" (p. 426); this assertion is more striking because the authors are usually careful to qualify, as in the unexception-

able assertion on the same page that Southern Republican Congressmen "did not truly represent the majority of the Southern people. One of the most unfortunate reflections of this exclusion of Negroes from the body national is the necessary and drastic depersonalization of Negroes. In the colonial period, while they are described as raising crops, working "as butlers, cooks, and gardeners" and "in shops," they are first introduced as one of "two different kinds of workers [who] were found [in order] to solve the labor shortage" (pp. 72-3). After Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin, "slaves" are "owned" and "slave labor" is "depended upon" and "needed," but the slaves don't *do* anything (p. 343).

There is no description of life in slavery or of Negro resistance to it. The same tendency is evident with individual Negroes. Nat Turner (who "led a Negro rebellion in Virginia") is one of three individuals mentioned in a section describing Abolition (pp. 309-10); the other two, Garrison and Yancey [sic], are listed in the index; Turner is not. Later, B. T. Washington "opened Tuskegee Institute" (p. 431) and is admitted to the index. Finally, there is a picture and caption showing "Nkrumah of Ghana" speaking before the U.N. (p. 683). These three and Dred Scott are the only individual Negroes so much as mentioned in the text itself. On the other hand, three others are the subjects of books listed as enjoyable for further reading. A biography of Harriet Tubman is noted as the story of an underground railroad conductor (whose color is not specified, p. 319); Washington's *Up From Slavery* is a "description of a Negro boy's struggle and triumph" and "gives a good picture of Negro development after the war" (p. 435); a book on Ralph Bunche is also included (see below).

The second of the inter-related bases of approach is the felt necessity of avoiding any implication that *racial* differences have produced strains in American culture. This principle of avoidance concerns the Negro primarily and perhaps exclusively: witness the endorsement of racial pluralism and harmony in the section entitled "The population of Hawaii includes several races of people—all now United States citizens" (p. 694). Sometimes the resultant faults are minor (relatively), as in the failure to indicate that the Spanish introduced Negro as well as Indian slavery (p. 33) and in omission of the racial element in the proslavery argument (p. 310). But this avoidance also results in omissions which produce serious distortion, as in the extended account of the Dred Scott decision where the court is presented as ruling that a slave was not a citizen while nothing is said of the court's decision on citizenshp of Negroes (pp. 391-2). For a time, during Reconstruction, especially when the Klan terrorizes "Negro voters" and "Southerners struck at the Negro" (p. 428), Negroes as such—rather than as slaves (for there is no discussion of Negroes who were not)—became a *factor* in the story. But then, almost predictably, they simply drop from view, appearing neither as an issue nor as share croppers, much less as the targets of legislators or as migrants to Northern cities.

> The so-called liberals in Congress and in the country have long been complaining about the pace of desegregation across the South. I have noted that these same spokesmen have been conspicuously silent about the same slow pace of true desegregation in the public schools of all the great cities of the North.
>
> —Senator Allen J. Ellender, April 8, 1964

They are finally resurrected, by implication rather than by name, in 1954 when the Supreme Court opines that the "segregation of races in the public schools" is "contrary to the Constitution." Just why this decision was made and why newspaper reporters had waited for it "for months" we are not told. Sectional differences in response to the decision are handled by reference to "Louisville" and "Baltimore" and "some communities." Still more remarkable is the ensuing discussion of two civil rights acts, in which "civil rights" are not described,

the term Negro is not mentioned, and one waits until almost the end before the element of "race" is so much as referred to (pp. 689-90). Finally, the recommendation of a biography of Ralph Bunche describes him as "raised in poverty and in the midst of ugly discrimination" but does not identify him as a Negro. This reference to racial discrimination is the most drect in the book; it also seems to be the only one.

Tightly linked with unwillingness to acknowledge race as a factor in American history is an apparent subservience to Southern sensitivities on the subject. Indications turn up at every hand. Among them, in addition to many cited above, are the treatment of Abolition (the extent, motivation, and arguments of which are accorded less space than the Southern proslavery defense, pp. 309-11), the incorrect suggestion that opposition to slavery began "in the early 1800's" (and therefore, by implication, had no connection with the founding of the nation and the ideals of the Revolution and the Founding Fauthers, p. 309), the literally invariable use of the ingenious "War Between the North and the South," and, inevitably, the unflattering presentation of the Radical Republicans. Finally, the treatment of the Negro in this book is strongly colored by blandness, timidity, and an underlying determination to present life as pretty. In fact, of course, much of the Negro's experience in America has been far from pretty, and by implying otherwise this book distorts an important aspect of the American past.

Winthrop D. Jordan

BOOK SIX

Mabel B. Casner and Ralph H. Gabriel, *The Story of American Democracy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., third ed., 1955). A high school textbook.

These remarks are merely by way of supplement to my report on the eighth-grade textbook, Casner and Gabriel, *Story of the American Nation* (1962). The two books are substantially similar. Although the older book is used in the eleventh grade, it does not appear to be appreciably more sophisticated than the newer version; indeed the commercial publisher refers to the newer book as the "successor" of the older. While the newer book appears to be essentially an up-dated and more sprightly version of the older, there are important differences between the two in their treatment of the Negro which suggest that some of the newer book's deficiencies may have derived from an unwillingness to arouse certain Southern sensibilities.

Thus, though the older version is on most counts unsatisfactory in much the same way as the newer, it includes several brief sections on the Negro which were altered or struck during revision. In contrast to the newer, it offers a picture of Crispus Attucks on a page headed "Patriots from many peoples" with the notation, "a Negro of Massachusettes, [who] was the first to die for American liberty" (p. 133); a not unfavorable reference to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (p. 358); the assertion that "As time passed, the Klan fell into the hands of men who used it for selfish purposes" (p. 389); and a review question asking the student to think "What changes have taken place in the South since the end of the war . . . in the lot of the Negro" (p. 395). In the process of revision, too, the title of one chapter has been changed from "Americans Seek the Goal of Equal Opportunity" to "Americans Improve and Enrich Their Ways of Life." A section on ante-bellum theater and music in the older book, which includes a discussion of "Negro spirituals" summarized by the statement that "The Negroes made the first important contribution to American music" (pp. 293-95, 297) has been discarded in the newer version. Gone (in the interests of factual accuracy?) is the statement *re* nullification, "In our day, nearly everybody accepts

the power of the Supreme Court to decide whether or not a law is in accord with the Constitution" (p. 273). Gone too is the categorical statement, "The democratic ideal of equality left no room for slavery . . . . " (p. 297). Finally, the newer version contains nothing so explicit and forceful as the following: "For what is democracy but belief in the dignity of every individual human being, famous or unknown, whatever his color, race, or religion." (pp. 658-59). All in all, one gains the impression that *The Story of American Democracy* provides a more satisfactory treatment of Negroes in American history than does *Story of the American Nation* (1962), but also that the older book is far from faultless in this respect since it contains so many of the defects which appear in the newly revised version.

Winthrop D. Jordan

BOOK SEVEN

Ralph V. Harlow and Ruth Elizabeth Miller, *Story of America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., revised ed., 1957). A high school textbook.

GENERAL COMMENT

This book contains few of the crudities that textbooks sometimes offer about Negroes. At times it shrinks before the tender sensibilities of the South, as, for example, in its elaborate explanation of why it refers to the Civil War as the "Civil War" (The most common [name] but not the most correct") and as the "Was Between the States." (p. 211) It sometimes strives to be fair in treating controversial points either by maintaining a gray impartiality or by belaboring both sides (the true and the good, it seems to assume, in such cases, are always in the middle, half-way between the two sides). There are some striking omissions—the NAACP is not mentioned, nor are most Negro leaders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and most court cases affecting Negro civil rights are ignored. And clumsy organization robs the book of some of its limited force (examples appear below).

After saying all this, I would still say that this text is much better than several others I examined. Despite omissions it makes a serious attempt to trace a variety of Negro experience. And in the process it shows that the Negro has suffered in America but it does not romanticize him.

SLAVERY

The book assumes that the origins of Negro slavery were solely economic: because land was cheap in the colonies and white labor expensive, it holds, Negroes were imported. This emphasis upon slavery as an economic institution is maintained throughout the book. There is no suggestion that slavery developed over a period of time until it was recognized in law in the 1660's nor is there a hint that the Negro's color contributed to his enslavement. (The book may intend to suggest that the unfree status of Negroes gradually hardened into slavery, for it refers to the human cargo of 1619 as "the first Negro servants," but thereafter it uses the word "slaves.") Slave life is ignored in the book and nothing is said about the psychological and social effects of the institution.

In most places the treatment of slavery is factual, though no facts are given about broad areas of slavery. There is one admirable assessment of slavery: "The benefits of slavery were all on the side of the owners. As the anti-slavery speaker said, nobody ever asked to be a slave . . . [and, the text concludes] nothing could make up for the loss of freedom. . . . " (p. 130).

This passage occurs in a chapter on nineteenth-century America. Nothing comparable is said about slavery in the colonial period. In fact slavery in the colonial period is treated in a chapter that presents colonial life as one of unrestrained achievement. The colonial period is a period of progress, of material advance; plantations served colonial enterprise and slaves served on plantations. In this context, which exudes utilitarian values, slavery may appear to the uncritical reader as an eminently useful—and good—institution.

The account of the colonial period may lend itself to a second inference (perhaps incompatible with the one above). The tone of the discussion of the colonial period is one of relentless optimism. Colonial America was a going concern, as these section headings suggest: "Ability counted more than birth in America," "A sturdy middle class developed," "Colonists could better themselves," "Royal governors had a hard time." "Free American air" is contrasted with the stuff unfree Europe breathed. The setting is one described by Turner, and in it slavery by implication appears as an aberrant condition of relatively little importance. And although success is attributed in large part to American opportunity, at one point race is cited in a discussion of craftsmen like Benjamin Franklin—"men of good racial stock and ability." (p. 29)

ABOLITION, CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION, THE NEW SOUTH:

Although the book's treatment of slavery is unsatisfactory, the worst of it may be cancelled out by the discussion of the anti-slavery movement. "Here," the discussion begins, "was a system [slavery] that denied all the values of the American system to millions of Americans. Slaves had no share in economic opportunity, no part in politics, no rights to education, and not much chance at moral improvement. Slavery was completely cut of line with American ideals." (p. 151) But in its account of the anti-slavery movement, the book gives the impression that it was unfortunate that anyone insisted too strenuously that these American ideals should be extended to Negroes. Moderate men who "tried to end slavery by appealing to the American sense of fair play" are contrasted favorably with abolitionists, "men who thought they could get results by making everybody angry." (p. 152) To incite hatred was the intention of the abolitionists, according to the text. Although the text does not advocate the view attributed to the South—that "the real danger to the welfare of the United States came not from slavery, but from abolitionists"—it evidently admires a statement cited from Daniel Webster "that abolitionists accomplished nothing good or useful."

In the chapter heading the book makes obeisance to the argument that state rights "led to" the Civil War, but the substance of the chapter itself focuses on the problems of slavery, and especially the extension of slavery into the territories. The book fails to discuss any aspect of the part of Negroes in the War.

Although the discussion of Reconstruction relays several bankrupt views, at one point implying, for example, that two disgruntled leaders, Sumner and Stevens, were largely responsible for post war policy, for the most part it is detached and informed. It provides a detailed description of the "black codes," which are described as appearing as "slavery in disguise" (p. 236); it points out that although Negroes held offices they never controlled the government of any state; it shows that Congress attempted to protect Negroes and to elevate their social status; and it suggests that the motives of the Radical Republicans were mixed and included a desire to aid Negroes in the South. The treatment of the Ku Klux Klan is less satisfactory, implying in a muddy passage that the "Fourteenth Amendment" forced Southerners to create it. Its terrorist activities are described, however.

The Negro's position in the "New South" is rendered in detail and with considerable sensitivity. The book probably over-emphasizes the extent to which Negroes participated in the wealth of the New South. But it is more perceptive in its treatment of the denial of equality to Negroes. ("Southern whites refused to admit Negroes to any kind of equality." p. 250). The repressive techniques employed to maintain white supremacy are catalogued; the failure to observe the Fourteenth Amendment is described; and Jim Crow laws are listed. A striking passage penetrates the basis of the surface harmony in southern life. "White families em-

ployed Negro servants and nurses, and the relationship was kindly and pleasant on both sides—provided always that no one raised the issue of equality. White people patronized the shops and stores Negroes ran, provided only whites were served. Negro clergymen, doctors, lawyers, and teachers worked only among their own people. If Negroes made no attempt to change this system there was usually no trouble." (p. 251)

TWENTIETH-CENTURY NEGROES:

Negroes are scanted in the second half of the text; and there is no recognition of the importance of post Civil War racial conflict. With the exception of Jack Johnson and Joe Louis, the boxers, no Negro is mentioned nor are Negro problems noted until post-World War II America is treated. The problem Negroes faced in getting a living in the post-war period are only acknowledged. Negro sharecroppers are singled out as a deprived group, and the text notes that President Truman's Civil Rights Commission reported "that a good many Americans still found their color, their religion, or their national origin a barrier to bettering their social and economic positions." Civil rights, the text suggests, remained a crucial issue.

Finally, the Brown Case gets adequate treatment in the book. The decision is briefly described and Southern resistence is noted. Unfortunately the Brown case is treated without any reference to earlier Court cases; and the discussion fails to mention either the court's contention that separate facilities are inherently inequal or its use of sociological data.

Robert L. Middlekauff

ED002091

CHANGING ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Wilson Record

A paper delivered at the Tenth Symposium on Race and Education, Michigan State University, May, 1964. Reprinted by permission of the author. All papers of the Symposium are to be published in the printed proceedings, by Michigan State University. *The author is Professor of Sociology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.*

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One cannot speak of the attitudes of school personnel without qualification, because what school people think about race or any other issue is subject to wide individual variation. But though attitudes have not been uniform, it is safe to say that on the whole school board members, administrators, teachers and counselors have been entirely too slow in facing squarely the racial inequities in the American educational system. On this score educators have failed the moral and professional commitment of their calling.

We live in a society which increasingly prescribes education as the passport into the economy, the polity, and the community. Yet the people who run our schools—and therefore serve as guardians of the passport—have been remiss in equalizing the opportunity for acquiring it. By their default educators must accept a large share of the responsibility for narrowing the life chances of perhaps twenty per cent of the nation's children.

Understanding the attitudes of school personnel—the circumstances in which they have developed and the manner in which they may be changed—is essential for achieving the goals of a democratic educational philosophy, clearly enunciated by the Supreme Court a decade ago. Had such understanding and its application as public policy been realized during the long and dreary interval since 1954, integration of public schools would be much closer. I do not wish to overestimate the influence that school personnel of even the most dedicated and fairminded sort could have exerted over the many forces—habit, custom, confusion, and bigotry—that stood in the way of integrated education. But one senses both moral defection and professional failure in the